

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
**DEMETRIOS
GIANNAROS**

Deputy Majority Leader

2005 Capitol News - 21st District - Farmington



Dear Friends:

It is a pleasure to send to you my first newsletter as Deputy Majority Leader of the House of Representatives. This has been both a challenging and productive year. We adopted legislation on many important issues including stem cell research, ethics, veteran's benefits, seniors, health care, environment and protecting our children.



We passed a budget in which our municipalities received many more dollars than were in the Governor's budget. I worked hard to see that Farmington received its fair share. This helps to keep our local economy stable and should prevent high tax increases.

Thank you for placing your trust in me and for allowing me the privilege of serving you in the House of Representatives. Please continue giving me your feedback and insights on issues facing our town and state. Your suggestions are helpful in my efforts and I encourage you to stay in touch.

Best Wishes,

Demetrios Giannaros
Deputy Majority Leader

State Grants to Farmington Increase Again

During this difficult budget year, we were able to increase state aid to municipalities. **Farmington has fared well with a 6.6% increase in state grants for 2005-06.** This includes increases for Education (ECS, etc.), Town Aid for Roads, Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT grants) for in-town state owned property and Pequot/Mohegan Fund Aid.

Total Estimated Annual State Grants to Farmington

2005-2006	\$5,637,926
2004-2005	<u>\$5,286,419</u>
An increase of	\$351,507
	(a + 6.6% gain)

Source: Alan Shepard, Office of Fiscal Analysis

\$1.0 Million of State Funded Bonds Approved for Farmington

I worked very hard, and successfully, to include the following Farmington projects in the State Bonding Bill that passed in the legislature and was signed by the Governor:

\$450,000	Tunxis Mead Recreational Facility
\$300,000	Unionville Center Improvement
\$200,000	Farmington High School Track
\$50,000	Farmington Youth Center

Funding is contingent on final approval by Governor Rell.

Driving Safety

Cell Phones: After many attempts, the General Assembly was successful in restricting cell phone use and banning the use of some other electronic devices when driving. Starting October 1st drivers must use hands-free technology for cell phone usage. When responding to an emergency a driver may use hand held phones as may emergency personnel when performing their duties. It also adds any type of distracted driving as a secondary offense (drivers can only be cited for that offense if pulled over for another reason). **PA 5-159 and PA 05-220**



Booster Seats: Connecticut has joined a growing list of states that require children ages 4-7 to be in booster seats when they are passengers in motor vehicles. Legislation passed this session requires that children up to their 7th birthday, or until they reach 60 pounds (whichever comes first), ride in a booster seat. The new law – taking effect October 1st – also requires that children up to age 1, or until they reach 20 pounds, ride in a rear-facing car seat. **PA 05-58**



Teenage Drivers: In an effort to reduce motor vehicle accidents involving younger drivers, new restrictions were enacted on 16 and 17 year old drivers. These young drivers will be banned from driving between 12:01 AM and 5:00 AM. Exceptions to the ban include driving related to school, work, religious activity, or in the case of emergency. The new law also increases to 20 hours the behind-the-wheel experience necessary to obtain a driver's license. Except for emergencies, young drivers are completely banned from using a cell phone when driving. **PA 05-54**



Rep. Giannaros and Dr. Henry Lee, Forensic Scientist and Chief Emeritus of the Connecticut State Police, at a legislative event honoring Dr. Lee.

Health Initiatives

Stem Cell Research: We have approved \$100 million over 10 years. This funding will go primarily to Yale and UConn Medical Schools — the only facilities that have infertility clinics. Cloning is absolutely forbidden! The research is reviewed and approved by an institutional review committee, and the disposition of embryos and embryonic stem cells is voluntary on the patients' part. Fines are up to \$100,000 and imprisonment up to 10 years for each violation of the law. This research could make significant differences in the lives of our friends and family suffering from diabetes, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. This legislation gives many people hope. **PA 05-149**



Breast Cancer Screening: Annual breast cancer statistics in the state of Connecticut offer sobering testimony on the toll the disease has on women and families in our state. State lawmakers approved legislation to require that insurers cover ultrasound screenings for breast cancer, if recommended by a doctor. Women will receive access to a screening process that offers reliable, early detection. This legislation makes progress in the effort to promote early detection, precluding the spread of cancer to other parts of the body. It helps prevent misdiagnosis by requiring coverage of a form of screening that is both comprehensive and highly accurate in detection. **PA 05-69**

Insurance Coverage for Infertility: In legislation approved by the General Assembly this session, women will be ensured coverage of medically necessary infertility diagnosis and treatment. The disease of infertility affects over 70,000 Connecticut citizens aged 18-45. With certain exemptions for the state's health insurance companies, including limits on age and cycles of treatment, as well as religious organizations, proven and effective medical treatment from the state's doctors will be covered for couples seeking coverage for this life-changing treatment. **PA 05-196**



Environment

Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation:

Connecticut has 360,000 acres of farmland but is losing its farmland at a faster pace than any other state with 7,000 to 9,000 acres a year being consumed by development. A \$27 million fund will be created by collecting a \$30 document recording fee to be used to preserve farmland, set aside open space and preserve historic sites. **PA 05-228**



Connecticut Clean Car Incentive Program: Contained in the Connecticut Climate Change Plan of 2005, which the General Assembly approved last session, this legislation calls for the creation of a plan to encourage Connecticut families to invest in vehicles that produce lower greenhouse gas emissions. Under the legislation, government leaders are called upon to convene a working group that will submit a plan no later than January 2006 to reduce sales taxes on clean cars, such as the hybrid models. The transportation sector is the largest source of greenhouse gas pollution in the state, contributing more than 40% of the state's total greenhouse gases. This legislation provides significant health and economic benefits to Connecticut families, providing them with a breath of fresh air. **SA 05-6**

Seniors



Rep. Giannaros and Ms. Lillian Butts, age 81, at a Farmington Care Center luncheon.

valuable service in 2003. It's important to care for those who cared for us. [PA 05-77](#) and [PA 05-280](#)

Veterans' Pensions: Beginning with the 2008 tax year, 50% of the federally taxable military retirement pay will be exempt from the state income tax. It's right that we serve those who served for us. [PA 05-251](#)

It's Back: Seniors asked us to restore the Department of Aging. We listened. It will be reinstated as an independent agency for our seniors on January 1, 2007. We lost this

Property Tax Credit

January 1, 2006, the property tax credit on the state income tax increases from \$350 to \$400. [PA 05-251](#)

Consumer

Bank Holidays: Credit unions and banks will now be allowed to close the day before or the day after a holiday. Please watch for notices at your bank so you don't get caught short of funds.

[PA 05-47](#)

Gift Cards: The value of unredeemed gift cards will no longer have to be turned over to the state. We've finally learned to keep and make it simple. [PA 05-189](#)

Small Claims Court: The maximum amount of damages that may be brought to small claims court increased this session from \$3,500 to \$5,000. Small claims court has jurisdiction over all matters involving money, except libel and slander. This is good for us, the consumer.

[PA 05-42](#)



Rep. Giannaros in House of Representative Chambers working for you!

Education

Teachers Retirement: An additional \$30 million from surplus will be deposited in the Teachers' Retirement Fund over the next two years. More is needed to put the fund on a sound actuarial basis, and it is my hope that we will continue to close this gap. [PA 05-251](#)



Food Allergies: This bill requires all state schools to adopt policies to keep children with food allergies safe. This law provides the mechanism by which individual school districts can protect students who are vulnerable to food allergies and help faculty and staff better prepare for an incident when a vulnerable child is exposed. [PA 05-104](#)

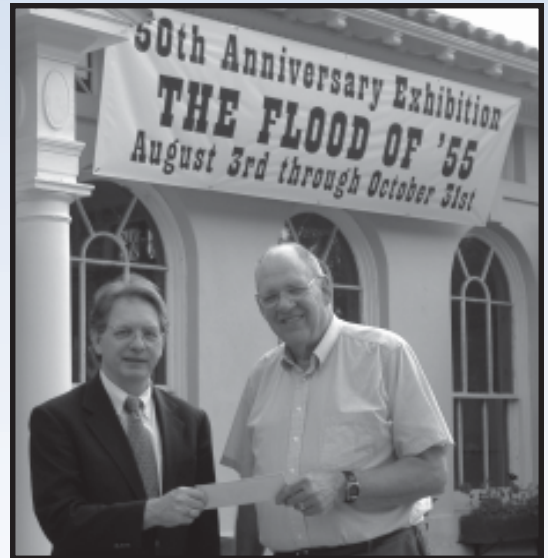
Farmington Briefs

New Horizons Village Celebrates Strawberry Festival



Rep. Giannaros with Mr. Michael Shaw, Executive Director of New Horizons Village.

State Grant to Unionville Museum



Rep. Giannaros presents state grant check to Mr. Frank Corbeil, Director of the Unionville Museum, to help support preservation of Unionville history.

Your State Representative — Keep in Touch

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**Demetrios Giannaros,
Deputy Majority Leader,
at Memorial Day Parade, 2005.**

Deputy Majority Leader
Demetrios Giannaros
State Representative



**If you need a copy of any of the
following 2005 reports, please call me:**

At the Capitol:
Tel. 240-8585
Fax. 240-0206

- ☐ Major Public Acts
- ☐ Acts Affecting Seniors
- ☐ Acts Affecting Business
- ☐ Acts Affecting Children
- ☐ Acts Affecting Veterans
- ☐ Acts Affecting Education
- ☐ Acts Affecting Environment
- ☐ Acts Affecting Firefighters
- ☐ Acts Affecting Municipalities
- ☐ Acts Affecting People with
- ☐ Psychiatric Disabilities
- ☐ Programs For Seniors
- ☐ Living Will Packet
- ☐ Medical Care Packet